

Message Text

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SUBJ: WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE--TEXT OF FAO PRESS

RELEASE

1. TEXT OF FAO PRESS RELEASE 2449, NOV 13 WAS DISTRIBUTED AT UN NOV 14. IN IT THE STATEMENT IS MADE THAT THE IDEA OF A CONFERENCE WAS ADVANCED BY THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES IN ALGIERS IN SEPTEMBER. THE FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL IS REPORTED AS ASKING THE CONFERENCE TO CONSIDER AN INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY AIMED AT REGULATING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION ON A GLOBAL BASIS, BRINGING GREATER STABILITY INTO AGRICULTURAL TRADE AND INCREASING EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

2. FULL TEXT OF PRESS RELEASE FOLLOWS:

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THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO) YESTERDAY ASKED THE ORGANIZATION'S GOVERNING CONFERENCE TO ADOPT AN INTERNATIONAL UNDERTAKING AIMED AT BUILDING UP BASIC NATIONAL

STOCKS OF CEREALS TO PROVIDE THE WORLD WITH A MINIMUM LEVEL OF FOOD SECURITY AGAINST PERIODS OF SEVERE SHORTAGE.

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IN ADOPTING HIS PROPOSAL ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY, THE CONFERENCE

WOULD BE TAKING "A SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD IN THE HISTORY OF THE FIGHT AGAINST WORLD HUNGER", DIRECTOR-GENERAL A.H. BOERMA DELCARED.

THE PROPOSAL, MR. BOERMA SAID, ENVISAGES " THAT ALL COUNTRIES, BOTH DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING, SHOULD, TO THE EXTENT OF THEIR POSSIBILITIES, ADOPT NATIONAL STOCK-HOLDING POLICIES". THE PROGRAMME WOULD ENTAIL EXPANDED AND CO-ORDINATED ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, WHERE FOOD PRODUCTION IS OFTEN BELOW DESIRABLE LEVELS AND WHERE STROAGE FACILITIES ARE FAR FROM ADEQUATE.

NOTING THAT THE SUBJECT OF FOOD HAS RECENTLY BECOME "A MATTER OF WIDESPREAD CONCERN TO PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD", MR. BOERMA STATED THAT THE SITUATION OF RAPIDLY-VANISHING RESERVES "HAS REVEALED IN A VERY CLEAR LIGHT THE DANGERS FOR THE WORLD OF EXCESSIVE DEPENDENCE ON THE NORTH AMERICAN SURPLUSES. IT HAS ALSO, I HOPE, THROWN INTO EVEN SHARPER RELIEF THAN BEFORE THE FUNDAMENTALLY UNBALANCED STATE OF WORLD AGRICULTURE IN GENERAL".

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL SPOKE ON BEHALF OF OTHER MEASURES TO CORRECT THIS IMBALANCE, NOTABLY A WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE UNDER UNITED NATIONS AUSPICES AND FAO'S PROPOSAL FOR INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT, WHICH ENTAILS A SERIES OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEASURES TO ENSURE STABLE GROWTH OF AGRICULTURE AND TRADE AND THE EXPANSION OF EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE COULD BE ORGANIZED BY THE UNITED NATIONS AND FAO IN COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD) AND OTHER APPROPRAITE BODIES, MR. BOERMA SUGGESTED. HE PROPOSED ROME AS THE SITE OF THE CONFERENCE IN OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER OF 1974. BUT HE WARNED THAT THERE WAS NO POINT IN HOLDING SUCH A CONFERENCE UNLESS IT HAD "THE PURPOSE OF BRINGING ABOUT REAL PRACTICAL ACTION TO IMPROVE THE WORLD FOOD SITUATION.A ACONFERENCE WHICH, AFTER AROUSING GREAT EXPECTATIONS, MERELY CONSISTED OF ELOQUENT DECLARATIONS AND PIOUS HOPES WOULD DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD. THE WORLD HAS BEEN THROUGH THAT SORT OF THING TOO OFTEN BEFORE". HOWEVER, "THIS TIME THERE MAY REALLY BE THE POLITICAL WILL TO DO SOMETHING IN SPECIFIC PRACTICAL TERMS", THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAID, POINTING OUT THAT THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE

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ALREADY HAD THE BACKING OF "MANY DISTINGUSIHED AND HARD-HEADED STATEMENT" IN THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY. THE IDEA OF A WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE WAS ADVANCED AT THE CONFERENCE OF THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES IN ALGIERS IN SEPTEMBER. A SIMILAR PROPOSAL WAS MADE TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 24 SEPTEMBER BY THE UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE, HENRY KISSINGER. REGARDING THE LONGER-TERM INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL

ADJUSTMENT, MR. BOERMA CALLED FOR A "ONE-WORLD" VIEW TO REPLACE "THE CHRONIC DISARRAY OF WORLD AGRICULTURE". HE ASKED THE CONFERENCE TO CONSIDER AN INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY AIMED AT REGULATING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION ON A GLOBAL BASIS, BRINGING GREATER STABILITY INTO AGRICULTURAL TRADE AND INCREASING EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE MOST URGENT OBJECTIVE IN ANY PLAN FOR INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT, THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAID, IS FOR " A TREMENDOUS UPSURGE IN THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES". EFFORTS TO INCREASE PRODUCTION CHIEFLY DEPEND ON THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THEMSELVES, HE SAID. BUT MR. BOERMA EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT "OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FROM THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IS ONLY ABOUT HALF THE MODEST TARGET". INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED FOR THE UNITED NATIONS' SECOND DEVELOPMENT DECADE. THE TARGET IS 0.7 PER CENT OF THE GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT OF THE ECONOMICALLY-ADVANCED COUNTRIES.

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAID:
"I APPEAL ONCE AGAIN TO THOSE COUNTRIES, WHICH HAVE OFTEN SHOWN GREAT GENEROSITY IN SUDDEN EMERGENCY CRISES DUE TO NATURAL DISASTERS, TO INCREASE THEIR REGULAR FLOW OF AID TO THE AGREED LEVEL AND THUS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, HELP TO PUT THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES INTO A POSITION TO DEAL WITH THESE CRISES MORE EFFECTIVELY THEMSELVES."

THE HEADLONG GROWTH OF POPULATION IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WAS CITED BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL AS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT OBSTACLES BLOCKING ATTEMPTS TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR FOOD.

ALTHOUGH FAO WAS NOT DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR DEALING WITH POPULATION MATTERS, HE SAID, THE ORGANIZATION PLAYS A USEFUL ROLE IN HELPING PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS REALIZE THE IMPLICATIONS
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OF THE SIZE OF THEIR FAMILIES IN RELATION TO THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING.
MR. BOERMA COMMENDED THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FOR COMING TO THE RESCUE OF DROUGHT-DEVASTATED COUNTRIES OF THE SUB-SAHARAN SAHELIAN ZONE.
"THE TRAGEDY OF THE SAHELIAN ZONE", HE SAID, "IS A CRUEL AND POWERFUL EXAMPLE OF WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THE VULNERABILITY OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES,"
UNFORTUNATELY, HE ADDED, THE CRISIS IS FAR FROM OVER. EMERGENCY MEASURES TO WARD OFF MASS SUFFERING WOULD HAVE TO CONTINUE INTO THE LATTER PART OF 1974, AND THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM WAS WOKING ON LONGER-TERM MEASURES FOR REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ZONE. UNQTE.
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